

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last night, we heard our President talk all about accountability. He wants our schools and our teachers to be more accountable to their students and the parents. This literally patterns after what is in a lot of our State laws and in the State of Texas.

He wants government to be more accountable to its citizens, and I think we all agree with both of those premises.

Mr. Speaker, I also appreciate the President's support for HMO reform, and hopefully similar to what the law is in the State of Texas. HMOs should be accountable to their patients, just like schools should be accountable to their students and parents, and government should be accountable to the taxpayers and citizens.

President Bush told us last night that he wants to promote quality health care through a strong, independent review organization, and I agree. The independent review organizations had been instrumental in the success of the Patients' Bill of Rights in the State of Texas.

But the independent review organizations, the IROs, are powerless if health plans can ignore their recommendations without consequences. By providing legal remedies in State courts, patients have a layer of protection that ensures health plans will do the right thing.

As much as the President talks about frivolous lawsuits, we have not seen that thing in Texas called a frivolous lawsuit. In fact, after 3 years on the books, our patient protections there have been less than five lawsuits filed in 3 years, less than five. That is hardly the glut of lawsuits that opponents of patient protection seem to fear.

The Texas plan for HMO reform has worked because the binding independent review protects health care plans from being held liable for punitive damages. You can provide that protection in there. But on the flip side, the HMO plans, the health plans know that if they ignore those independent review organization recommendations, they will have to answer in State court.

That is a powerful incentive to do the right thing.

The Bipartisan Patient Protection Act includes these important accountability provisions, while still protecting employers and health care plans from frivolous lawsuits.

The Bipartisan Patient Protection Act ensures that HMO plans who follow the recommendations of that external review board cannot be held liable for punitive damages. It also limits the amount of damages that can be awarded so that the plans are not forced to pay arbitrary sums.

Without accountability provisions, though, patients are defenseless against their HMO plans. They have no

remedy if an HMO ignores the recommendation of the review board or acts in bad faith. Without accountability, a Patients' Bill of Rights provides no protections at all.

We have to have accountability, just like we do from the government to our taxpayer. Mr. Speaker, managed care plans seem content to write the rules, but they cry foul when we want them to play by those same rules. It is time we level the playing field on the Federal level, just like a lot of our States have done, and ensure that HMOs provide the medical care that they agreed to do.

That is why we should pass the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act.

LET US SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here today following the address of President Bush to our colleagues and to the Nation regarding his priorities and where he hopes to take our Nation in the next 4 years during his administration.

Let me first commend him for identifying and discussing a number of issues that I would expect Democrats and Republicans to agree on wholeheartedly.

He mentioned Head Start specifically. He talked about the environment. He talked about a military pay increase for the personnel first before we buy new equipment.

He talked about our continuing efforts to increase the budget at the National Institutes of Health. He pledged to restore integrity to the Social Security system. He offered what is a blueprint for Medicare reform, and specifically one piece that was music to my ears, an effort to pay down the national debt.

Now, if we listened to the other side of the aisle this morning, those baying at the moon, suggesting somehow that this is an irresponsible blueprint of fiscal remedy, who have argued against tax cuts, argued for more spending and consistently raised rhetoric that somehow this whole process is irresponsible from the start, it begs the question. Whose money is it really? If you stay around Washington or any of our capital cities around the country and you remain in the room with politicians for very long, they will convince you it is government's money.

That theme plays out today on national talk radio as they launch an aggressive attack to demean the President's proposal, again suggesting it is irresponsible and telling us that they have a better plan.

Having come to Congress in 1994, I remember the legacy left us by the majority party, at that time the Demo-

cratic Party, which was a ballooning deficit, out-of-control debt, increasing allocations annually for interest to pay on the debt, no ability to reign in spending, and when they really ran into rough sledding in the high degree of deficits, they blamed Ronald Reagan.

As a member of the Committee on Ways and Means and a Member of Congress, I can assure the American public listening to me that the only persons who can effectuate tax cuts, spending proposals are the Members of Congress, the House and the Senate, as prescribed by the Constitution.

Yes, President Reagan recommended tax cuts, and he was successful in convincing Congress to pass them, but along the way they were careless in not reducing spending to offset that reduced amount income. So we borrowed against the legacy of future generations to fund the programs that were near and dear to the hearts of Members of this body. We have a chance to do something different now. When we proposed paying down the debt and balancing the budget, we were told by then-President Clinton we could not do it in 13 years, maybe 11 if we tried hard. Lo and behold, we suggested 7, we did it in 4, and now we have what is surplus dollars in the Treasury.

The call from the other side is to spend, spend, spend more money on priorities. I think if you listened to the President clearly last night, he outlined priorities that meet the test of time, are designed to help society's most vulnerable, are prepared to protect our domestic tranquility and our national security and really go about changing the fundamental way we conduct our mathematical equation here in this body.

Now, my colleagues can complain and can obfuscate and can deride his proposals, but I believe in my heart that at the end of the day they will come around to suggest and recommend that these are not irresponsible cuts.

Mr. Speaker, I remember last year when we proposed, I believe, some \$600 billion, potentially \$700 billion tax relief to the constituents, we call it tax relief, but it is really refunding of overpayment, we were told that number was exorbitant. It was out of sight, it was out of mind. It would explode the deficit.

Yet, I hear the number bandied about by the other side of the aisle that they may accept \$900 billion. What a difference a year makes. What a difference a year makes.

Let us focus on trying to resolve first and foremost our disagreements on key policy issues, but let us also take a moment to recognize the hard work of every American who sends their money to Washington and hope they can do

some good with it, hope we can improve the infrastructure of our Nation's highways, strengthen Social Security, provide for the military pay increase as necessary and do the kind of things that society should do for its constituents.

As the President suggested last night, charities are no replacement for government, and I am a supporter of some of the involvement government has in our daily lives. But if we keep the money here, if we keep it on the table, and we suggest somehow we will pay down the debt, folks, get with it and get real, it will not happen.

Once there is an excess of money left on the table, there is a program in every Member's district that deserves that surplus, and we will argue and we will debate and we will spend.

Let us join together, support the President's initiative, give the taxpayers some real relief, give them some of their overpayment of surplus revenues back to them so they can spend it in their communities, on their children, figuring out their future and letting the government take less of their take-home pay on a weekly basis.

ELECTION OF MEMBER TO COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 70), and I ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 70

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and he is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Small Business: Ms. CAPITO of West Virginia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

PUBLICATION OF THE RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE 107TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, pursuant to Rule XI, clause 2(a) of the Rules of the House, a copy of the Rules of the Committee on Agriculture, which were adopted at the organizational meeting of the Committee on February 14, 2001.

Appendix A of the Committee Rules will include excerpts from the Rules of the House relevant to the operation of the Committee. Appendix B will include relevant excerpts from

the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. In the interests of minimizing printing costs, Appendices A and B are omitted from this submission.

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Applicability of House Rules.—(1) The Rules of the House of Representatives shall govern the procedure of the committee and its subcommittees, and the Rules of the Committee on Agriculture so far as applicable shall be interpreted in accordance with the Rules of the House of Representatives, except that a motion to recess from day to day, and a motion to dispense with the first reading (in full) of a bill or resolution, if printed copies are available, are non-debatable privileged motions in the committee and its subcommittees. (See appendix A for the applicable Rules of the House of Representatives.)

(2) As provided in clause 1(a)(2) of House rule XI, each subcommittee is part of the committee and is subject to the authority and direction of the committee and its rules so far as applicable. (See also committee rules III, IV, V, VI, VII and X, *infra*.)

(b) Authority to Conduct Investigations.—The committee and its subcommittees, after consultation with the chairman of the committee, may conduct such investigations and studies as they may consider necessary or appropriate in the exercise of their responsibilities under rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives and in accordance with clause 2(m) of House rule XI.

(c) Authority to Print.—The committee is authorized by the Rules of the House of Representatives to have printed and bound testimony and other data presented at hearings held by the committee and its subcommittees. All costs of stenographic services and transcripts in connection with any meeting or hearing of the committee and its subcommittees shall be paid from applicable accounts of the House described in clause (i)(1) of House rule X in accordance with clause 1(c) of House rule XI. (See also paragraphs (d), (e) and (f) of committee rule VIII.)

(d) Vice Chairman.—The Member of the majority party on the committee or subcommittee designated by the chairman of the full committee shall be the vice chairman of the committee or subcommittee in accordance with clause 2(d) of House rule XI.

(e) Presiding Member.—If the chairman of the committee or subcommittee is not present at any committee or subcommittee meeting or hearing, the vice chairman shall preside. If the chairman and vice chairman of the committee or subcommittee are not present at a committee or subcommittee meeting or hearing the ranking member of the majority party who is present shall preside in accordance with clause 2(d), House rule XI.

(f) Activities Report.—(1) The committee shall submit to the House, not later than January 2 of each odd-numbered year, a report on the activities of the committee under rules X and XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives during the Congress ending on January 3 of such year. (See also committee rule VIII(h)(2).)

(2) Such report shall include separate sections summarizing the legislative and oversight activities of the committee during that Congress.

(3) The oversight section of such report shall include a summary of the oversight plans submitted by the committee pursuant to clause 2(d) of House rule X, a summary of

the actions taken and recommendations made with respect to each such plan, and a summary of any additional oversight activities undertaken by the committee, and any recommendations made or actions taken with respect thereto.

(g) Publication of Rules.—The committee's rules shall be published in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the committee is elected in each odd-numbered year as provided in clause 2(a) of House rule XI.

(h) Joint Committee Reports of Investigation or Study.—A report of an investigation or study conducted jointly by more than one committee may be filed jointly, provided that each of the committees complies independently with all requirements for approval and filing of the report.

II. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETINGS—REGULAR, ADDITIONAL AND SPECIAL

(a) Regular Meetings.—(1) Regular meetings of the committee, in accordance with clause 2(b) of House rule XI, shall be held on the first Wednesday of every month to transact its business unless such day is a holiday, or Congress is in recess or is adjourned, in which case the chairman shall determine the regular meeting day of the committee, if any, for that month. The chairman shall provide each member of the committee, as far in advance of the day of the regular meeting as practicable, a written agenda of such meeting. Items may be placed on the agenda by the chairman or a majority of the committee. If the chairman believes that there will not be any bill, resolution or other matter considered before the full committee and there is no other business to be transacted at a regular meeting, the meeting may be canceled or it may be deferred until such time as, in the judgment of the chairman, there may be matters which require the committee's consideration. This paragraph shall not apply to meetings of any subcommittee. (See paragraph (f) of committee rule X for provisions that apply to meetings of subcommittees.)

(b) Additional Meetings.—The chairman may call and convene, as he or she considers necessary, after consultation with the ranking minority member of the committee, additional meetings of the committee for the consideration of any bill or resolution pending before the committee or for the conduct of other committee business. The committee shall meet for such additional meetings pursuant to a notice from the chairman.

(c) Special Meetings.—If at least three members of the committee desire that a special meeting of the committee be called by the chairman, those members may file in the offices of the committee their written request to the chairman for such special meeting. Such request shall specify the measure or matters to be considered. Immediately upon the filing of the request, the majority staff director (serving as the clerk of the committee for such purpose) shall notify the chairman of the filing of the request. If, within 3 calendar days after the filing of the request, the chairman does not call the requested special meeting to be held within 7 calendar days after the filing of the request, a majority of the members of the committee may file in the offices of the committee their written notice that a special meeting of the committee will be held, specifying the date and hour thereof, and the measures or matter to be considered at that special meeting in accordance with clause 2(c)(2) of House rule XI. The committee shall meet on that date and hour. Immediately upon the filing of the notice, the majority staff director (serving as the clerk) of the committee shall